

**CLAIMS:**

1. A spool (1, 10, 21, 22, 35) for shortening the length of a cord (14) and optionally tensioning it at the same time, the spool comprising a reel formation in the form of an elongate generally straight shank (2, 12, 23, 31, 37, 41, 55) around which cord can be wound to shorten its effective length, the shank having a transverse retainer formation (4, 13, 20, 40, 51 and 5, 11, 25, 33, 36, 42, 49, 50, 58) at each of its ends for operatively preventing cord wound onto the reel from unwinding therefrom, a keeper formation (4, 13, 20, 40, 51) at one end of the shank for cooperation with a cord to maintain said end in association with the cord whilst the shank is rotated to wind cord onto the shank by rotation thereof and a torque transmitting formation (5, 11, 25, 33, 36, 42, 49, 50, 58) whereby the reel can be rotated about its own axis either directly by hand or indirectly utilizing a tool (44, 52), the spool being characterized in that the transverse retainer formations are adapted operatively to prevent unravelling off the shank of cord wound around the elongate shank at least whilst the cord is held under tension and the axis of the shank extends in the same general direction as that in which the cord extends; and in that the keeper formation is located at one end of the shank and the torque transmitting formation is located at the other end of the shank.  
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2. A spool as claimed in claim 1 in which the transverse retainer formation (4, 13, 20, 40, 51) at said one end of the shank forms also the keeper formation.
- 25 3. A spool as claimed in claims 2 in which the combined retainer and keeper formation (4, 13, 20, 40, 51) is a generally U-shaped formation extending at generally right angles to the length of the shank.
- 30 4. A spool as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which the retainer formation (5, 11, 25, 33, 36, 42, 49, 50, 58) at said other end of the shank forms also the torque transmitting formation.

5. A spool as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which the length of the shank is from about 10 to about 50 times the diameter of the shank.
6. A spool as claimed in claim 5 in which the length of the shank is from about 15 to 40 times the diameter of the shank.
7. A spool as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which additional holding means (6, 28, 30) are provided for releasably engaging a cooperant cord to prevent unravelling thereof off the shank under conditions in which tension is removed from the tension member.
8. A spool as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which the spool is formed from a suitable gauge of metal wire or rod that is bent to form a generally straight shank in the middle; a combination retainer formation and keeper formation at one end; and a combination retainer formation and torque transmitting formation at the other end.
9. A spool as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which the torque transmitting formation is a handle (5,11) formed integral with the shank.
10. A spool as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 8 in which the torque transmitting formation (42, 49, 50, 58) is adapted for cooperation with a separate manually operable tool (44, 52) in the form of a crank.
11. A spool as claimed in claim 10 in which the spool has a generally axially extending axle (43, 59) for cooperation with a bore or socket in a cooperant part of said manually operable tool in order to align said part and the spool approximately axially during cooperant use thereof.
12. A method of shortening a cord comprising the steps of associating the keeper formation of a spool as claimed in any one of the preceding claims with the cord; rotating the shank generally about its own axis by means of the torque transmitting formation with the shank extending transverse to the cord so as to wind cord around the shank to a required extent; and releasing the torque

transmitting formation such that the shank extends in the same general direction as the cord and the transverse retainer formations at each end serve to prevent unravelling of the cord from the shank.

5 13. A method as claimed in claim 12 in which the spool is manipulated such that the shank extends at an incline to the cord, at least during rotation of the shank to initiate winding of the cord around the shank and, in the case that a plurality of revolutions of the shank are required to shorten the length thereof adequately, winding said plurality of revolutions on the shank towards said one end thereof  
10 having the keeper formation, this being effected by manipulating the angle at which the shank extends transverse to the general length of the cord, followed by a decrease in the angle at which the shank extends relative to the cord so that a final revolution or part revolution of the cord spirals along a substantial portion of the length of the shank.

15 14. A picture having a cord for suspending it from a suspension point and spool as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 11 associated with the cord.

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